



# Arkansas River Advisory Committee

Meeting Highlights from February 23, 2005

Place: 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall 455 N. Main, South Conference Room

*Next Meeting Scheduled:* March 23, 2005

## **Agenda Item 1.**

### **In attendance:**

D. Kay Johnson, Department of Environmental Health  
Libby Albers, Department of Environmental Health  
Kay Drennen, Department of Environmental Health  
Tonya Bronlewee, E.A.R.T.H.  
Jack Brown, KU School Of Medicine  
Marsha Carr  
Kathy Dittmer, Riverside Association  
Sharon Fearey, Council Member  
Bob Martz, Council Member  
Irene Hart, Sedgwick County  
Vaughn Weaver, Water & Sewer Department

## **Agenda Item 2. Update on the Technical Task Force**

The Technical Task Force meetings are scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:30a.m. at the Water Center (101 East Pawnee). The River Advisory Committee meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 1:30p.m. at City Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, South Conference Room. Libby Albers has scheduled the meetings through December 2005. Any questions regarding the schedule dates may be directed to Libby Albers at 268-8372.

## **Agenda Item 3. Mission and Goals**

Original Mission Statement: The River Advisory Committee will provide a two-way communication Link to the diverse elements within the community and the river basin. Serve as a liaison to organizations or interest groups; assist in building a consensus for the various programs that will be initiated to reduce pollution in the river; assist in the review and implementation of a public education program; provide input on the development of a long range River improvement plan; examine issues relating to building partnerships with various stakeholders impacting the River Quality; identify and evaluate Best Management Practices information; develop effective legislative support for Arkansas River initiatives; and perform in other advisory capacities. The Committee will receive updates on Technical information involving water quality from the Technical Task Force.

### **Key Points:**

- It is necessary to have this group in on the front-end discussions and planning which affects the development along the river corridor and the dock river areas.
- What is the "long range improvement plan". The answer is found in what the stakeholder's perception of their desired uses are in consideration with best use and practices. The Ark River Advisory Committee needs to take a principal position in developing a plan. This could be to review and provide input into a river use or river management plan.
- Recreational use of the river and the identity of the entity who is actually in charge of the river might be two significant facets to be mentioned in the mission structure or at least better defined somewhere in organizational committee description of scope of activities.
- Education is getting the right information out so the right decisions can be made.
- Impact on flushing and lowering the Lincoln street dams and the comment is made that currently we have grown to such a dynamic situation, ---10 years I've caught over 400,000 fish. We've found 50 species in the last 10 years. At this time, it appears the efforts are an acceptable risk, but at the same time we are going to get a lot of public comments about fish kills on the banks of the river.

- Should we identify *recreation* in with the category of stakeholders? Another thought, would recreational usage be considered as an interest group.
- As a point of information, the group will further consider what constitutes stakeholders vs. interest groups.
- Also, recognizing Media as a stakeholder is a considered opinion? If so, media does not need to be separately identified in the mission, as they are a stakeholder.
- Need a better definition about use of terms restoring water quality vs. improving water quality.
- One thought is to establish the mission statement as a primary document with a secondary document defining the Goals and Actions.

**River Development:** The impact to the river appears may minimally affected but it is important this group have an opportunity to review all potential impacts. Considerations and the opportunity for input must be made to make certain all changes do not negatively affect the river. We also want to make sure the public knows this committee is working both with the developers and others on projects, which may affect the river. It is important that this committee make certain there is a scrutiny of all plans, as we team to ensure positive decisions about development along the river. *The Public* needs to be assured that we are all working together.

### **Sampling Techniques General Discussion**

Also discussed were the Ark River Festival, and the water sampling requirements coming up. Vaughn Weaver commented on changes in the sampling techniques and discussed changes in the methods of sampling requirements. Process requirements noted were: reports on E.coli will be required and not fecal/coliform, as was previously required to be reported on. Additional comments were discussed in regard to the technical process and timeframe for beginning the water testing. Sampling will begin in mid-April. A side note reminder that various levels of rain, including heavy rain can affect the sampling results.

### **How to get River Quality information to the Public?**

The group discussed ideas about ways to better communicate the methods and outcomes used in the performance of river water testing to the Public.

#### **Key Points:**

- Suggestions were by use of the Internet, color-coding explanations and use of more concrete learning tools, so citizens may learn more about the river monitoring, testing and water quality.
- Also raised was the idea about contacting various affected media and working more in partnership with media.
- The question is brought to the group about incorporating the color of the River water quality flags that are flying at the river, and what it means. Another idea is brainstorming how the color-coding examples used in the Air Quality index might be a good idea as a benchmark for how we might use the same concept with a water quality index.
- Establishing better communications with media and the public should result in improved citizen understanding and reporting by the media. Importance of learning about the fish, the kinds, the conditions they live in etc. Identifying various points of contact in the media will be a next step to growing a network for outreach.
- Is there a possibility of incorporating something about the Ark River quality into the school, using this in the school systems which have ties to the Ark River. Positive and negative aspects of the events and status of the river should be considered part of the public awareness and education, a valuable learning tool. Other input from school districts like Maize, Goddard, Andale, and other relevant out of USD259 School Districts may want to be considered for inclusion in many of our projects. Their input and potential for educational awareness will be valued.
- Another potential idea is developing the type of articles and news stories which can be used at the stations as filler stories on days when they are not overloaded with other news items. In this way we may stimulate greater interest in the river.

### **Adjourn**